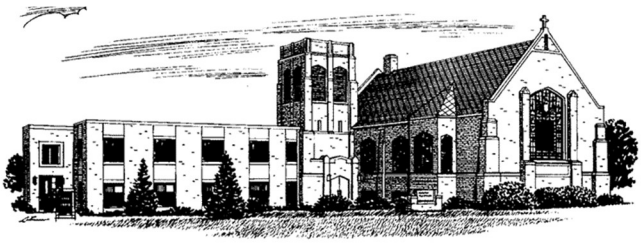
SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085



Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
bradley717@gmail.com

Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

Typical Sunday at Saron:
Fall, Winter and Spring:
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40 Learning Hour for Ages 2-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

Summer of 2023 (beginning June 4):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*

PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR MARCH 2023

How often do we mention the saints that are part of our Lutheran tradition and calendar? Some may be surprised that we do it at all. And, what would be the purpose? This Lenten season, during our mid-week worship, we will sing the much-loved Holden Evening Prayer, but we will also stop to both honor and reflect on the commemorations that occur during the weeks in Lent in 2023. It is my hope and prayer that by doing, so we will more deeply engage with our Christian faith.

March 1 - George Herbert; John Wesley and Charles Wesley
March 8 - Perpetua and Felicity; Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth
March 15 - Gregory the Great; Patrick
March 22 - Joseph; Oscar Romero
March 29 - Hans Nielsen Hauge; John Donne

I invite you to join me in this time of song, prayer, and reflection.

-Pastor Joan

Mid-Week
Lenten
Worship

"Singing with the Saints"
March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29
6pm Soup Supper
7pm Worship
On-location & via Zoom

General Information

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Watch weekly emails and door signage for any change in protocol. As of printing, masks are encouraged for those who feel so inclined but not required. Nursery workers and communion assistants will wear masks.

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kathleen & Phillip Preston are at Caretel in St. Joseph;
Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at the Willows in St. Joseph.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

3/1 Michael Hoodlebrink
3/4 Krin Jurgensen
3/4 Caleb Pudell
3/8 Austin Kamala
3/9 Colbe Pudell
3/10 Brad Frey
3/12 Susan Rood
3/14 Ruth Stelling
3/17 Mia Bradley
3/18 Peter Johnson
3/18 Constance Slater
3/19 Karleann Stankiewicz
3/21 Kaitlin Hooper
3/22 Janet Oleson
3/23 Molly Becker
3/25 James Nicholas
3/26 Sue Bailey
3/27 Eloise Moely
3/28 Matthew Gacek

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

3/2 Tom & Janet Taylor

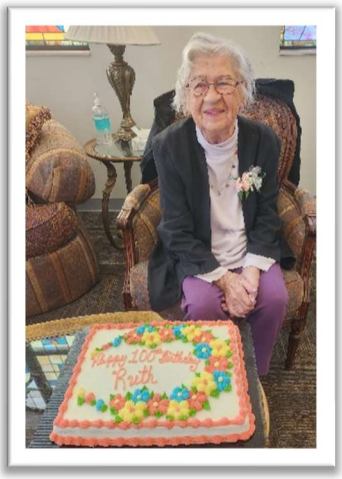
"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

CONGRATULATIONS

Our loyal Zoomers from Delaware, Steve Nkurlu and Blythe Milbury-Steen, were blessed with the arrival of their new baby daughter on February 3, 2023. Sia Joy Nkurlu weighed 6lbs 11oz and was 19.7 inches long. Congratulations, Steve and Blythe!

SYMPATHY



We offer our condolences to the family and friends of

Ruth Ball

upon her death on February 12, 2023.

Ruth was a long-time member of Saron and was thrilled to celebrate her 100th birthday with us in November. A funeral was held at Saron on Friday, February 17 at 11am.

We also send our prayers to the family of

Cynthia Schmidt

upon her death on February 11, 2023.

God is our refuge and strength.
- Psalm 46:1a

During our Annual Meeting on January 29, we were presented two proposals. The Sanctuary & Chancel Flooring/Accessibility Project requested a budget not to exceed the amount remaining in the F&F fund designated for Worship Enhancements. That amount, $33,342, was approved by a congregational vote. The Office Building Roofing & Drainage Upgrade Project requested $49,000, some of which would be funded by remaining F&F funds. That was also approved by a congregational vote. As we receive more details, we'll pass them on to you!

Worship

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we now have Sensory Bags available for use during worship or at other times when helpful. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made confidentially online via a link in our Thursday mailings. You may include as much detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are also invited to be part of the Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes. If you want to know more about this ministry, please contact Pastor Joan.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Make sure to note any special occasion to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks can be payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Please take them home after the 2nd service to enjoy. **Simply return the vase to Saron.**

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page. We do not put names with the pictures. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Pastor.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Wednesday Zoom Coffee Hour at 11am as long as there is interest. All are welcome!

Are you interested in becoming a member of Saron or learning more about the faith from the Lutheran perspective? If so, contact Pastor Joan.

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that occasionally need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages in our congregation and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

March 5: Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 12:1-4
Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
John 3:1-17

March 12: Third Sunday in Lent
Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42

March 19: Fourth Sunday in Lent
1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

March 26: Fifth Sunday in Lent
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45

YOUTH GROUP

Our February meeting was postponed until after the 11am service on:

March 5, 2023
Annual Bradley Taco Bar & Pool Party
4370 S. Tanglewood Trail in St. Joseph

Watch your email for more information. Bring your bathing suits! Friends welcome!

Contact Merrily at merrilyannsmith@gmail.com with any questions.

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

We offer a time of age-appropriate study between the two services (9:40am-10:30am):

- **Grades 5 and Under** meet in the Sunday school classroom.
- **Confirmation Students** (Grades 6-8) meet in the confirmation classroom.
- **Adult Forum** meets in the upstairs lounge.

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Our studies will break for the Lenten season and return after Easter on April 13. You are welcome to join us on **Thursday mornings in the lounge from 9:30am-11am.** Contact Pastor Joan if you have any questions. This class is open to all interested in attending, for one session or many.

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

We will break for Lent and return after Easter on **April 11.** We meet **Tuesday evenings at 6pm** in the upstairs lounge for an hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. All are welcome!

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

FORUM & fellowship

Forum & Fellowship will break for Lent and meet again after Easter on **Wednesday, April 19 at 7pm in the upstairs lounge at Saron**. Ed Staude is the facilitator of this group.
Bring a friend. All are welcome!

BOOK CLUB

Sunday, March 5th, at 6:30 in the upstairs lounge, is where you'll want to be! We'll be discussing "The Book of Longings" by Sue Monk Kidd. The author takes an audacious, historical fictional accounting of Biblical history, grounded in meticulous research and written with reverential approach, to Jesus' young life and "marriage" to an amazing woman named Ana. Want to find out more? Please join us. This will be one of our best selections yet.

Save April 2nd for our discussion of "Strength in what Remains" by Tracy Kidder. This is a non-fiction selection and the story of Deo who arrives in the US from the horrors of civil war and genocide in Burundi with $200.00, no English and no contacts to help him. With the aid of strangers, his journey leads to Columbia University Medical School and a life devoted to healing. Unforgettable!

If you want to be on the mailing list to receive all book group information and Zoom links, call Kathy Cowall (269) 428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com

"I read for pleasure and that is the moment I learn the most." - Margaret Attwood

LIVING LUTHERAN MAGIZINE

It's time to renew your "Living Lutheran" subscription! The cost is $9. Please send cash with a note or a check with an appropriate memo. There is no official form - your payment is considered a subscription.

The Living Lutheran is the magazine of the ELCA and has lots of feature stories about ministry around the country, as well as ELCA news. Subscribing through Saron provides a significant cost reduction over individual subscriptions while still allowing it to be delivered directly to your home.

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Due to a scheduled Lenten service, Deborah Circle will **NOT** meet in March. We will be participating in a service project which will be detailed in a future group email.

Contact Melanie at 269/449-8399 with any questions.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month. These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your generous offerings!

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

For I was hungry and you gave me food.
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
Matthew 25:35

On January 26, Jim Manore, Jim Caple, Ken Kohs, Pastor Joan, Mary Zylema and Colleen Lundgren were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing lunches for a steady stream of 85 guests. The guests were served a ham dinner, including cookies prepared by Saron members.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

Support

The Support Committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

Directory Updates

We are doing our best to keep our printed directories up to date and available for your use. If you picked up one of the early copies, you may need to make these edits:

- Marcus Roll's area code is 517
- Jan Taylor's house number is 1153

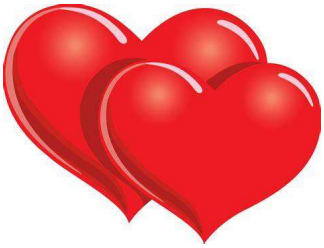
If you see an error or omission, please let us know!

Gratitude

Excerpt from letter in regards to recent donations to Lutheran Disaster Repsonse:

"Your Spirit-filled generosity helps familes and communitites reeling from disasters here in the United States and across the globe. No matter the disaster, no matter the need, your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response enable people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods now and far into the future."

- Amanda White
(Director of Congregational Generosity)



Big thanks to Alaina, Frederico and Ava of our Confirmation Class for baking and decorating lots of delicious cookies that were used during fellowship after worship and for the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen. You have big hearts and we appreciate it!

Education Opportunity!

African Descent Ministries of the ELCA celebrated Black History Month with season two of *Talks at the Desk*, a video series that explores diverse expressions of the church. You can download the videos at ELCA.org/ADM. Join to hear youth, young adults, rostered leaders, elders and friends in various communities share their own sacred stories.

Episode 1 engages inspiring Black leaders in Milwaukee, WI. Episodes 2&3 take place in the U.S. Virgin Islands with visits to several of the oldest Lutheran churches in the Western hemisphere. We meet wise and courageous people of faith who remind us about sacred struggles of the past and the presence of God and ancestors today in the work that remains to be done.

For more updates, follow @ELCAADM on Twitter and Instagram or check out facebook.com/elcaadm.

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY

April 2 at 8:30am & 11am

EXCITEMENT

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 6 at 12:15pm & 7pm

CONFUSION

GOOD FRIDAY

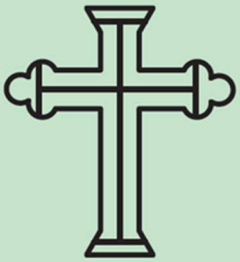
April 6 at 12:15pm & 7pm

DESPAIR

EASTER VIGIL

April 8 at 7pm

HOPE



EASTER SUNDAY

April 9 at 8:30am & 11am

JOY

Our 11am and 7pm worship services will also be available via Zoom.
There will be an Easter Breakfast and Youth Activities/Egg Hunt between services on Easter Sunday.

MARCH 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lent Worship	**2** 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**3**	**4**
5 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option 6:30pm Book Club	**6** 11am Prayer Group	**7**	**8** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lent Worship	**9** 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**10**	**11**
12 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**13** 11am Prayer Group	**14** 8pm Support Meeting	**15** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lent Worship	**16** 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**17**	**18**
19 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**20** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Church Council	**21**	**22** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lent Worship	**23** 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal **Soup Kitchen Day**	**24**	**25**
26 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**27** 11am Prayer Group	**28**	**29** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lent Worship	**30** 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**31**	